

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application, and in the Office Action, the Examiner issued a final rejection of all of these claims, under 35 U.S.C. §102, as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,862,325 (Reed, et al.).

Applicant requests that independent Claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10 be amended to better define the subject matters of these claims.

For the reasons presented below, Claims 1-14 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable; and the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment, to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-14, and to allow these claims.

The present invention relates to business rules that are applied to data used in computer applications. More specifically, the invention relates to procedures for managing and applying these rules in a way that allows the rules to be externalized from that computer application. This, in turn, allows the rules to be modified without the need to change any code in the computer application itself. This, as may be appreciated, greatly simplifies the management of the rules.

Reed, et al. describes a communications system that coordinates the transfer of data and instructions between databases. The transferred information may be used to control communications relationships, and information that changes in the provider computer is automatically updated in the consumer computer in order to maintain continuity of the relationship.

The Examiner specifically cited, in the Office Action, column 13, line 51 to column 14, line 10 of Reed, et al, which discloses that receipt and storage of new or updated information can trigger other actions.

As discussed in Applicant's previous Amendment, there is a very important difference between this invention and the procedure and system shown in Reed, et al. Reed, et al. discloses using rules, while the present invention is directed to establishing and changing rules in a certain way.

More specifically, with the present invention, business rules are stored, kept and used when they are in a table that is external of the computer application that uses the data to which the rules are applied. In contrast, with the procedure disclosed in Reed, et al, the information is downloaded to the consumer computer and automatically updated there.

This feature of the invention has a number of advantages. For example, the business logic is kept separate from the computer application. Thus, the business rules can be changed without changing any part of the computer application. In contrast, with prior art systems, the business logic is or become intermingled with the code of the computer application. When this happens, many parts of the code may need to be changed in order to change the business logic. This makes it difficult to change those business rules, and changing those rules may have unintended consequences. Because of these complications, changing those rules requires specialized programming skills. With the present invention, in comparison, the business rules can be changed by a business expert who does not have that specialized computer programming skills.

Independent Claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10 describe important features of the invention that are not shown or suggested in Reed, et al. Specifically, each of these claims describes the feature that the business rules are stored in, and processed, used or implemented while in, a table external of the computer application that uses the data to which the rules are applied. With the procedure disclosed in Reed, et al, the control information is downloaded to the consumer computer and used there for control purposes.

The other references of record have been reviewed, and these other references, whether considered individually or in combination, are no more pertinent than Reed, et al. For instance, Anderson, et al. discloses a basic object oriented computing system, but this reference does not teach managing and applying business rules as described in Claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10.

In light of the above-discussed differences between Claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10 and the prior art, and because of the advantages associated with those differences, it cannot be said that any of these claims is anticipated by or rendered obvious by that prior art. Accordingly, Claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. Claim 2 is dependent from Claim 1 and is allowable therewith; and Claims 5-7 and 12-14 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claim 4. Claim 9 is dependent from Claim 8 and is allowable therewith, and Claim 11 is dependent from Claim 10 and is allowable therewith.

The changes requested to the claims only elaborate on features already described in the claims. For example, the independent claims already describe the feature that the business rules are stored in a table, and Applicant is herein asking that the claims be amended to indicate that this table is external of the computer application that uses the data to which the rules are applied. It is thus believed that entry of this Amendment is appropriate, and such entry is respectfully requested.

For the reasons set forth above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment, to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102, and to allow these claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicant's Attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is asked to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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